

GrACE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GREENVILLE ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

VOLUME: 5

NUMBER: 7

JULY 21, 1987

NO MEETING THIS MONTH
SEE YOU IN AUGUST!

Take Note!

Since there is no meeting this month, I thought I would take this space which is reserved for the meeting announcements and mention a few things.

First, the next newsletter will consist of only articles contributed by club members. Usually I obtain a large percentage of the articles from other newsletters. In the next issue of the GrACE NEWS only articles from our club will appear. This is a dangerous thing to do, because if only one article arrives only one article will be put in the newsletter. SO SHARPEN THOSE PENCILS- USE THAT WORD PROCESSOR AND WRITE AN ARTICLE!

Second, I have just received a letter from OSS (Optimized System Software), they have a deal on the Mac/65(cart) macro assembler for the 8-bit systems and the Mac/65 Toolkit which is a library of macro to be used with the Mac/65 assembler. If purchased separately the cost would be (retail) \$108.95. However, OSS is discontinuing these the price has been reduced to \$45.00 (+\$3.00 shipping). If you do assembly language programming on the 8-bit machines these programs are great.



START An Article For The Newsletter Today!

To order send check, money order, Visa, or Mastercard number plus proof of User Group membership to:

Optimized Systems Software, Inc.
1221-b Kentwood Ave.
San Jose, CA 95129

Orders must be in before 7/31/1987.

Remember, no meeting this month so see you on August 18th.

E. C. Culbertson
Editor

Gr.A.C.E.

The Greenville Atari Computer Enthusiasts is an independent, non-profit organization and user's group with no affiliation with Atari Corporation, or any other organization. Membership dues (family) is \$28.00 per year. Membership includes access to the club's public domain program library, subscription to the Gr.A.C.E. newsletter, and access to the club's electronic bulletin board, Amazin' Grace (803-268-8138).

The GrACE newsletter is published monthly by the Greenville Atari Computer Enthusiasts, 187 Saratoga Dr., Greer, SC 29651. Permission to reprint articles in any non-commercial publication is permitted without authorization, provided credit is given to the Greenville Atari Computer Enthusiasts and the author. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of Gr.A.C.E..

The GrACE newsletter will accept any articles by members on any topic found pertinent to the club. Articles will be accepted in any form, although word processing files uploaded to the club's BBS (268-8138) with a message left to Ed Culbertson or Mike Jett, Editors, are preferred.

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 =====
 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL
 =====

Take a moment and look at your mailing label on this issue of the 'GrACE NEWS'. Check the right-hand side of the label for the word 'DUES'. Just after this word are the month/year when your membership expires. Try to renew at least one month early. This helps us with the accounting and record keeping and also avoids your missing any issues of the newsletter.

There are two easy ways to renew:

1. At the monthly meeting talk to Doug Slagh the club treasurer and present him with \$20 (in cash or check).
2. Send your name and renewal (\$20) to:

Doug Slagh
 104 Burgoyne Court
 Greer, SC 29651

VIP PROFESSIONAL — GEM VERSION A Lotus 1-2-3 Work-Alike

Review by Robert J. Nielsen

Current Notes

May 1987

In the Tower of Babel of computer software, there is one clear standard among spreadsheets: Lotus 1-2-3. This best-selling program has countless books, seminars, video tapes, and even a magazine to instruct and enlighten users. This, plus 1-2-3's reputation for versatility and adaptability — limited, it often seems, only by the creativity of the people using it — have made it the clear favorite of business spreadsheet users.

As most people are aware, an electronic spreadsheet program is a blank table in which users enter numbers and text to create such things as budgets, inventories, and mailing lists. The joy of working with such a program comes from the ease with which one can update the table, with the program recalculating such things as totals and percentages.

LOTUS 1-2-3

In addition to the spreadsheet function, Lotus 1-2-3 includes data base program and graphics functions. The data base is used to sort information, performing such tasks as alphabetizing lists, finding clients who have made purchases in the last month, and trimming from your list all customers who have purchases that total under \$20.00 for the last year and who live outside your state. While these are all useful functions of 1-2-3, you should be aware that although this is called a data base, it is not a data base in the same sense that more powerful programs such as dBase III+ are.

The graphics portion of Lotus 1-2-3 constructs pie, line, and bar graphs from information in the spreadsheet. This is useful in making presentations. People can be easily bored by a page of numbers, meaningful and accurate though the figures may be. Zing them, however, with a graph showing the profit line diving towards the bottom of the chart, and you have immediately caught everyone's attention.

In short, Lotus 1-2-3 is the favorite of business users to construct tables of numbers, sort information, and create simple graphs based on the information in the table. It is such a popular program, that other software publishers have come out with programs that claim to work just as Lotus 1-2-3 does. One of these clones, available for the ST, is VIP PROFESSIONAL.

Presently, the only way to have Lotus 1-2-3 compatibility with an Atari ST computer is by purchasing a clone such as VIP PROFESSIONAL. Given that the makers of Lotus 1-2-3 may never come out with a version for the ST (currently it exists only for the IBM PC and

compatibles) it may be the only choice for the future.

VIP PROFESSIONAL

This said, it is time to take a closer look at VIP PROFESSIONAL. First, the potential buyer should be aware that there are several versions of the program packaged in very similar boxes: the text version, the GEM version, and the LITE version. The text version was the original 1-2-3 work-alike spreadsheet. This has now been replaced by the GEM version, which adds mouse functions to the program. The LITE version, according to the publishers, is a less powerful program based on the same system, intended for home use. Last, but not least, the publishers will soon be coming out with a special power-user text version of VIP PROFESSIONAL. This program would look more like Lotus 1-2-3 than the GEM version of VIP does. In any case, take a careful look at the package before buying to make sure that you are getting the version that you want.

The GEM version, when first loaded, is immediately discernible as different from 1-2-3: the explanation line has been moved to the bottom of the screen, where a control box (for GEM functions) has been added. Fewer rows displayed on the screen and a superimposed grid are other variations from Lotus 1-2-3's look.

Differences in functioning are limited essentially to the mouse functions. For example, VIP GEM constantly displays a menu at the top of the screen, whose items can be selected by pointing and clicking. When the spreadsheet requires a range to be specified, the user can specify a box with the mouse. It should be pointed out that the GEM version allows the standard Lotus 1-2-3 keystrokes in performing any of the above functions. For example, the user can always type "/re(return)" to erase the contents of a cell.

In terms of the functions of the spreadsheet, the program does everything that Lotus (version 1A) does. I created graphs, alphabetized lists, created macros, and entered text just the way I did in Lotus 1-2-3. One difference is that GEM's spreadsheet is more than 8,000 lines long (vs. 1-2-3 version 1A's 2048 lines). This is not a handicap, unless you need to transfer a GEM worksheet containing more than 2048 lines to Lotus version 1A. Another difference is that moving the cursor through a spreadsheet in GEM is not as fast as moving the cursor in Lotus 1-2-3. (This difference, according to the publishers, is due to ST's requirement for 32K of memory for the screen display as compared with IBM's 2K to update the screen.)

The Lotus Access System (containing the programs for printing graphs and managing files) has no exact equivalent in VIP. VIP does include a graph printing program, which is, incidentally, easier to use than Lotus's. VIP does not include a file manager program, though the operating system of the ST would seem to perform these functions with alacrity.



One problem I experienced was loading VIP GEM on my 520ST. Time after time the program would not load correctly. I later discovered that this is due to a memory limitation. My solution was to not load the desktop system, which allowed enough memory for the program to load. The user's guide does not specifically state that you must boot up without desktop in order to successfully load VIP GEM on a 520 machine, so be warned in advance. The manual does say that power users should upgrade the 520's memory to a full megabyte. This you can believe.

One item that I did not have the resources to evaluate was the claim of 100% compatibility between VIP and Lotus worksheets. Transferring programs between ST and IBM PC or compatible machines would involve a telecommunications program or a 5 1/4" IBM compatible drive connected to the Atari ST.

A part of any serious business software is the support that the company provides. Since the change in location to Canada for the customer support services, my experience has been that the phones have been promptly answered by someone interested in helping me resolve my problem. Previous to this move, I had tried several times to obtain support from the California location, but never had anyone answer the phone. So, let's call the new support a complete success,

TEXT vs. GEM VERSION

Current owners of VIP text version may be curious to know what improvements have been made in the GEM version. First, GEM loads to display black text on white background rather than the white on black of the text version. Additionally, the help screens have now been made context sensitive, so that they respond directly to the function that the user is in when the help key is pressed. Screen updating is supposed to be faster in the GEM version than the text version. Because my text version had to be traded in to obtain my upgrade to the GEM version, I cannot supply any time trials; however, it is still slower than 1-2-3 on a PC. Perhaps most importantly, the GEM version is not copy protected, allowing you to place the program on a hard disk or to make back-up copies for personal use. Users who wish to upgrade may do so for \$19.95.

Lotus release 2 users will be interested to know that VIP Technologies Corporation intends to create a version incorporating the features found in 1-2-3's most current version. The company representative I spoke with stressed that this version is not scheduled for release any time in the near future, but that it is planned.

CONCLUSION

The GEM version of VIP PROFESSIONAL is a close clone of Lotus 1-2-3 except for the GEM functions such as pull-down menus, icons, and moving the cursor with the mouse. People who cut their teeth on the GEM system, and who want a 1-2-3 work-alike spreadsheet, will probably be happier with the GEM version. On the other hand, dyed-in-the-wool Lotus users will most likely find that the GEM functions distract them -- they will do better to stick with one of the text versions. In either case, given 1 Megabyte of computer memory, the GEM or text user will find a spreadsheet capable of solving all the problems that Lotus 1-2-3 is famous for, and in the same way as Lotus.

BALANCE OF POWER

MAKE MY DAY!
BALANCE OF POWER
CHRIS CRAWFORD
MINDSCAPE

by Jim Woodward, POKEY PRESS

When Mindscape first announced this program for the Macintosh and the IBM PC it was one that I wished that I could have for my ATARI. Mindscape wasn't too gung-ho on ATARI then. And now they have released Balance of Power for the ST. I may never sleep the same again.

First off, a little background on the author. If you have never heard of Chris Crawford you must be new to ATARI computers. Chris was working for ATARI and had programmed the now famous "Eastern Front 1941". This program was marketed through A.P.X., the ATARI Program Exchange. This exchange let the average home programmer submit his or her programs to ATARI, who then marketed them, though not with the same vigor as the "Arcade Game Cartridge of the Month". Many were public domain type programs and covered many different areas. You can still order some of them through the Antic catalog.

Chris also programmed "Excalibur", another game that was released just as ATARI (under Warner) was doing away with the A.P.X. Chris left ATARI and has gone on to program several other programs, including "Patton vs. Rommel". He also wrote an eight part assembly language tutorial for Antic On-Line. Those lessons were placed on the A.C.C.P.B./L.B.S., were a disk of the month, and are still being reprinted in other club newsletters. For more information on Chris Crawford, see the recent two part interview with him in "Computer Gaming World" magazine.

Balance of Power makes you the President of the United States and it is up to you to insure that your foreign policy is a success. You don't want the Russians to take any more than they can get away with, yet you also don't want to be spending the rest of your life in the shelter because you took the U.S.S.R. into World War III. You don't want to be a bully either, because that will turn off your allies and those countries that you want to be your allies. In the two player game, one player takes the U.S. while the other becomes the Secretary General of the U.S.S.R. Remember to take turns being each side, it is only fair.

You can also choose from four levels of play, beginner, intermediate, expert and "nightmare". Nightmare is only for those who can get through the 8 years (you are a two term President or you are not replaced as the Secretary General) without blowing up the world 48 times over. Beginner is the best place to start, just get used to the game. After that, move on. Each higher level places more options at your disposal, and makes things that much tougher. Take things slow, you aren't going to win each time, it may be a few games before you break even. But it will get easier the more you play.

As the leader of your country, you must make moves to enhance your foreign policy. They may involve sending money and/or troops to your allies (and those you want to be your allies) or you may send money to the rebels or military advisors, depending on the situation. The program gives you more information to help you make your decisions than any other I have ever seen. From the per capita number of doctors and phones to the countries human rights status. After making your moves you let the other side comment on your moves. You can then back down or stand our ground. If you haven't hit the "Red Button", then the other side makes their moves and you can take action against them. If you still haven't started the mushroom clouds, you go on to the next year. I don't want to spoil it for those who haven't played yet, so I won't go further into the details, but this program is both detailed and tough.

As you will read in the review of the book "Balance of Power" and see if you purchase the program, it is quite obvious that Chris Crawford did tons of research, making the game as accurate and realistic as possible, within the framework that he had to work with. Because of this program I learned what the term "Finlandization" means. I'd heard it before, but never knew what it meant. I actually learned a lot about foreign policy from reading the excellent documentation. All programs should have documentation laid out this well and this thorough. There is also a bibliography where you can get more information on how foreign policy is made, who the major players are, different types of weapons used by both sides, and more.

- This program can get your blood pressure sky high, your adrenalin flowing, and give you gray hair, all at the same time. I now know why Presidents leave the Oval Office looking thirty years older than they did when they went in.

If you are looking for something that isn't a shoot-em-up or another arcade game, this may just be what you are looking for. It will make you think about what is going on in the world and how decisions are made and who is making them. I recommend this program to everyone. NOTE: Please, buy this program. You will not be able to properly use this program without the documentation. And we need companies like Mindscape to keep releasing quality programs like this one.★

A QUICK, ADVANCE LOOK AT WORDPERFECT FOR THE ST

(Editor's note: The following is a brief product description of the features to be expected with the upcoming release of Word Perfect for the Atari ST. Although the program is still in the debugging stage, and no full release is expected until summer, Word Perfect appears to be the professional, full-featured word processing package that many have been waiting for since the ST came out almost two years ago...)

WordPerfect for the Atari ST

WordPerfect Corporation introduces WordPerfect for the Atari ST. The following is a brief list of features for this professional word processor:

Compatibility - File compatible with WordPerfect 4.1 for the IBM PC and other computers, allowing for direct document transfer to and from the ST without losing document format. Function keys are defined the same between versions, for increased ease of learning.

Footnotes/Endnotes - Footnotes and endnotes are automatically numbered and renumbered as you edit. Footnotes are properly placed at the bottom of the page, and endnotes are compiled at the end of the document. There is no limit to length, as all notes can overflow the current page if you designate.

GEM Interface - WordPerfect fully supports the GEM interface. Virtually all functions may be easily accessed with either the mouse or the keyboard. Desk accessories are fully accessible from inside WordPerfect.

List Files - A complete set of disk utilities is included, for total file maintenance.

Macros - Record any series of keystrokes or mouse actions and recall them with a single keystroke. Macros can be chained or conditional, as well as delayed.

Math - Math mode allows creation of numeric tables in your document, with automatic calculation of subtotals, totals, grand totals, or your own custom math functions.

Merge - Merge can be used to automate many office procedures, including forms, labels, contracts, and other time-consuming tasks. The Merge feature may also be combined with macros to create powerful user-defined functions.

Paragraph/Outline Numbering - Paragraphs can be automatically numbered in several different styles. Or, use the outline feature to simply organize your documents.

Printer Support - WordPerfect supports over 200 printers, including most laser printers. Documents can be printed using true proportional spacing, font downloading, or virtually anything else your printer is capable of.



Speller - A fast 115,000-word dictionary with phonetic and word-template look-up is included. Fully expandable, with legal and medical terms already included.

Table of Contents/Index Generation - Create a table of contents or index for your document, consisting of up to five levels.

Text Columns - Up to five newspaper-style or static text columns may be displayed and edited on-screen.

Thesaurus - Synonyms and antonyms may be displayed for up to three different words at the same time.

Undelete - The last three deletions or series of deletions can be restored at will, at any location you choose.

Virtual Memory - Data can flow onto disk when computer memory is full. No longer are your documents limited by available memory, but only by disk size.

A complete manual, including graduated lessons, a thorough reference section, and a color-coded keyboard template, provides ease of operation for both new and experienced WordPerfect users.

WordPerfect is scheduled for release this summer. Watch for world-class word processing at your local Atari dealer.

Questions can be directed to Jeff Wilson, Manager of Atari Development for WordPerfect Corporation, at CIS: 72447,3427. Or write:

WordPerfect Corp.
288 West Center
Orem, UT 84057

RAMblings

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Well, did you miss me? RAMblings didn't get written last month because I realized too late that I was not going to be in town when the deadline rolled around. I had just enough time to pack the car or write something and I guess you know what won out. Going to the beach is a sandy job but it's got to be done. I did think about you guys a lot though.

Seriously, when I got back and read my newsletter I realized that June was a bad month to let Ed down. Let me refresh your memory - Ed's article was about contributing to the newsletter and easily applies to any GrACE activity. For those of you who don't know what the word contribute means, the American Heritage Dictionary defines it as follows - To give or supply in common with others. Think about it.

PICK A DATE, ANY DATE

I was on GENIE the other day and ATARI has announced new dates (surprise!) for the 1200 baud modem, the MEGA ST and the PC clone. They are all supposed to be out by the time you read this. (I love that phrase, don't you?)

There was also an announcement that the author of the 8 bit emulator for the ST has agreed to release it to the Public Domain so ATARI has agreed to allow the use of the OS. I don't know when we will see anything. I understand that it is supposed to run very slowly - about 1/4 fourth of the speed of the 8 bits themselves.

This month's CHIPPIE Award is for the Best Setting of Product Release Dates in a Weekly Series. The award goes to our favorite computer company - ATARI.

That's it for this month. Remember that there will not be a July meeting.

Ken Richardson



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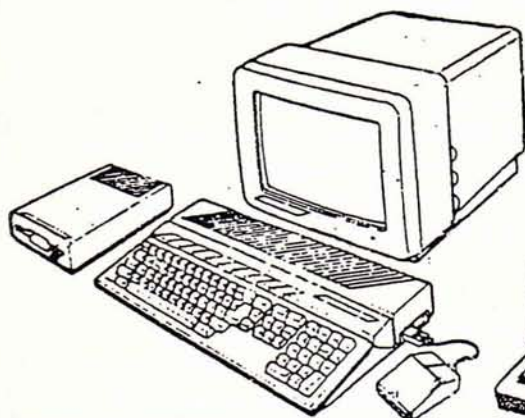


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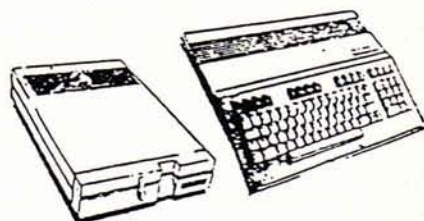
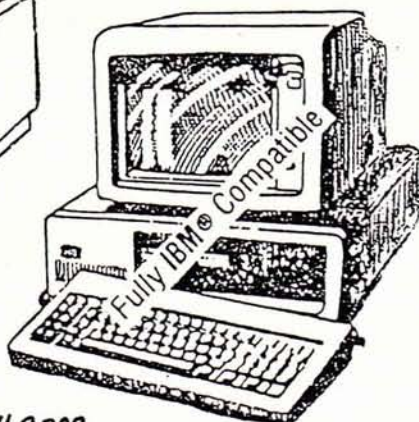
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JUNE MEETING
FOR THOSE WHO WERE NOT THERE

The meeting was called to order by Donald Shockley.

The Atarifest was mentioned and discussed as to our interest in participating.

Ray Byrd was called on to review his new program BLAZING PADDLES which was written for the Commodore in 1984 and for the Atari in 1986. The instruction manual was written for Commodore with a supplemental manual for Atari users. The disk is copy protected.

The program uses a joystick, paddles, graphics tablet, light pen or mouse for drawing. Ray commented that the joystick was cumbersome, the paddles worked more or less like an Etch-A-Sketch and were very hard to control. He had not tried either the graphics tablet or light pen, but he has settled for the mouse as the best to use. The program has help screens to instruct you in the use of each device.

The program is capable of only four colors on the screen at any one time, which is the screen color and three others. There are 256 colors to choose from and changing a color in the color field changes that color in your drawing. The program also has several tile and pattern selections. It has eight brush selections, uses windows for cutting and pasting, has zoom, fill, mirror, text, shapes, and scroll functions. The mirror and scroll features are NOT available in the Commodore version (sorry, Commodore).

The program loads three different fonts with three others to choose from that can be loaded in.

The program can format a disk and formats in enhanced density; therefore, the program only works with the 1050 disk drive; although this is not mentioned anywhere on the packaging. The program does not allow you to use two disk drives. There are three sets of shapes that can be used, but these cannot be added to.

The program works with Epson, Gemini, Panasonic, and Okimate printers.

Ray also told us of the new Genie 2 Mag that is available online. He has uploaded one to the GrACE BBS for our review.

Jim Cooper discussed the ST Disk-of-the-Month which includes GFA Basic as a run-time package, Monopoly (color monitor only), Wheel of Fortune, Backgammon, PacMan, and a Ram Disk utility.

George Nelson discussed the 8-bit Disk-of-the-Month. For its contents refer to last month's newsletter. George mentioned that we are still receiving the Analog Disk and that it is available in our library.

Rhett Bryson discussed Certificate Maker which he reviewed in the June newsletter. As usual his presentation was not only thorough, but humorous as well. Refer to the newsletter for details (concerning Certificate Maker, not Rhett's humor).

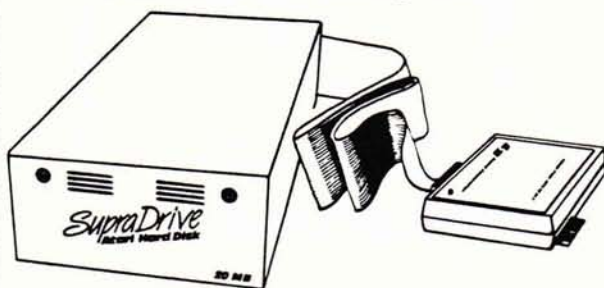
Rhett also presented a copy of FASTER MAGAZINE, a magazine on a disk. The magazine included editorials, reviews, public domain programs. The cost of the magazine is \$50.00 for six issues.

If my review of the meeting is not meeting your needs, please come to the next meeting. We need you.

Until then,
Mary Anne Terminato
G.r.A.C.E. SECRETARY

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TIPS 'N' TRAPS

by Jim Stevenson Jr.

Current Notes

MINER 2049

Q. Wasn't there a way to jump to higher levels? Does anybody remember how? I would appreciate the information.

-Manuel Fladelro

A. Try this. On the first station, move the man to a safe spot and then type in the phone number that was on the title screen. Then, whenever the "prepare for station" screen appears you can press shift-3 to jump to station 3, or shift-any number to jump to any station. You only have to type the phone number once.

-Bill Godfrey

THE PAWN

Q. Does anyone know what to feed the dragon? Also, how do you get past the double doors?

-M.C. Fresh

A. You shine the white on the gnomes, or hobbits, or whatever they are and then point to them. I'm not sure how to get past the doors. You do need to deal with the devil...

-Nino Greasmanelli

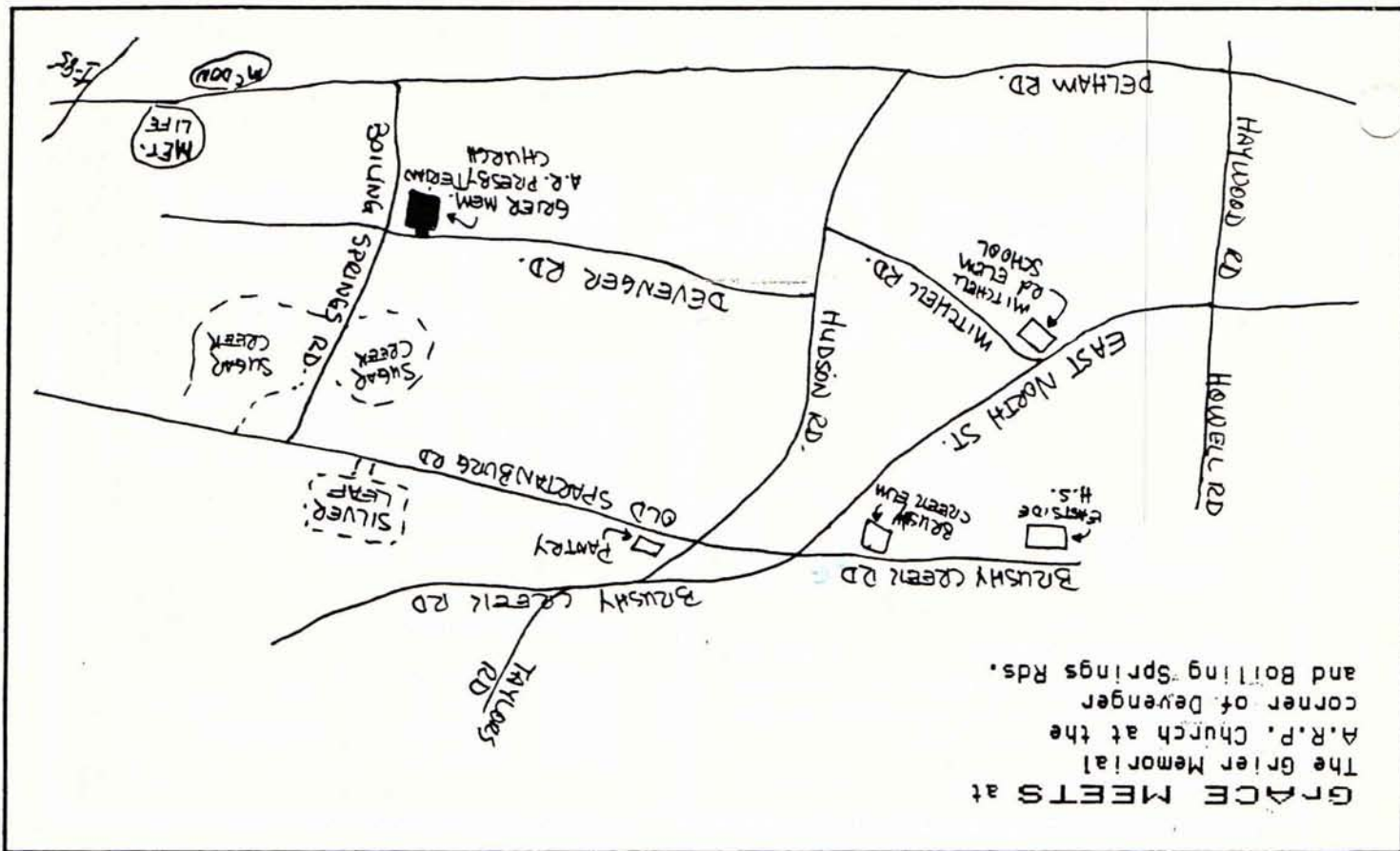
EIDOLON

Q. How do you get past the second dragon?

-Jim Stevenson

A. Each dragon has a weakness. For the first, it is red fireballs. For the second, it is yellow fireballs. For the third, it is green fireballs, etc. To figure out which fireball affects a certain dragon, try each one until you see "sparks". Fly from the dragon. That is the one you must use to kill it. Also, you can catch the fireballs with the space bar (except for red).

-David Kayden



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